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LEGENDS
& LYRICS
of
HAWAII

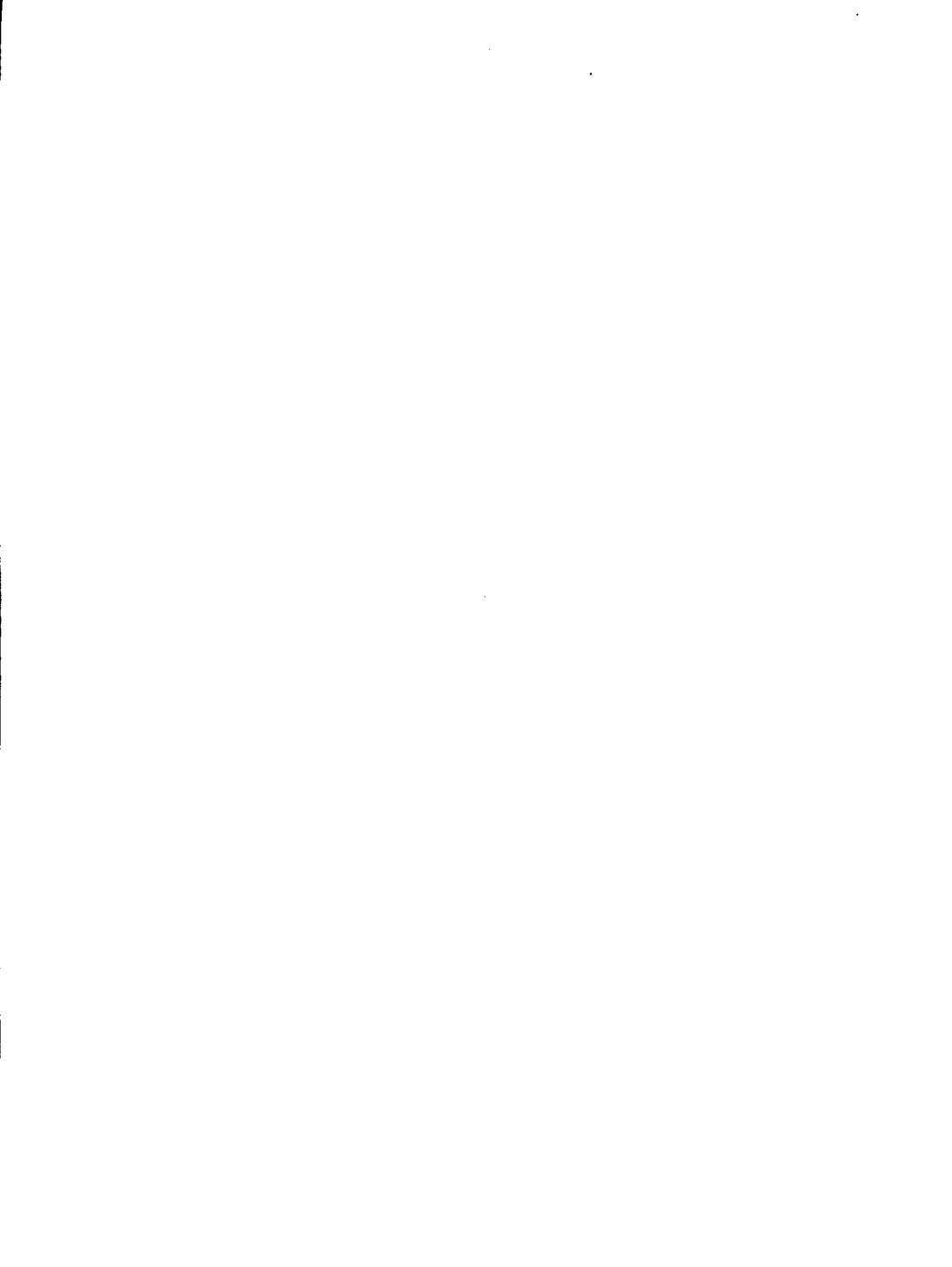
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Legends and Lyrics of Hawaii

BY

Margaret Kirby Morgan



HONOLULU, HAWAII
ADVERTISER PUBLISHING CO., LTD., PUBLISHERS
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William Richards Castle, Jr.

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As a flower unfolds in her beauty,
So has Hawaii in her glory,
Before my enchanted eyes.

ALOHA is a priceless lei, an endless chain
Of friendship, love, remembrance—all in sweet refrain.

LIQUID SUNSHINE

Smiles through tears;
Rain that dries in the air;
So be our fears —
The sun shining fair,
Our care
Disappears.

THE MAN WHO OWNS THE TARO PATCH

A little home below the hills,
'Cross which the welcome trade winds blow
And whisper tales of long ago,
Weird tales with all the ancient thrills.

The man who owns the taro patch,
He told them many a one to me,
Of how the gods they came to be;
The strength of them 'twas hard to match.

'Twas Kanaloa with his knife
These islands cut, each one a slice;
'Twas neatly done, and in a trice;
Great Kane reigned the God of Life.

'Twas Maui stept from isle to isle;
His mother's face shows in the moon;
'Twas he lassoed the sun, a boon
For Hina's tapa, spread a mile.

The man who owns the taro patch,
How many the tales he told to me,
Of how the gods they came to be;
The strength of them 'twas hard to match.

LEIS

I give you leis, sweet Nature's necklace, full
Of fragrance and of golden memories,
Lived on the heights amid the tropic lull.
But all things have an end—the prophecies—
And you must cross this world of war-wrought change
And I remain—I know 'tis honor first—
Which lifts our love beyond the common range,
And I say Go!—e'en though my heart needs burst!
These flowers know our souls' sweet harmony—
Each flower a prayer, each wreath a rosary!

THE MYNAH BIRD

Usurper, yet in full and free control!
I watch you as you strut across the green—
The robin, catbird, blackbird, I have seen
In seeing you. You play a varied role—
The catbird in the great and heavy toll
Of a bright feather-world; what that had been
Hawaii's rare regalia of the Queen:
The blackbird in your build, your eye so keen;
The robin, no! I think of what you stole!

MAILE

Within her heart's rich realm what wealth there lies,
Her hair, lei-crowned, loved daughter of these Isles,
Her face lit up by smiles—her dimpled smiles—
Romance—what tropic depths within her eyes!

AINAHAU

Fair Ainahau, what mem'ries cling to thee!
As down the palm-flanked road I walk and dream
Before the moon is up—the shadows seem
To breathe and speak of Kaiulani, she
Of royal birth who passed—sad though it be,
Beloved of the gods—that ancient theme
Is true today. But now the moon's agleam—
Ah, Princess dear, what hearts are bound to thee!

THE PALI

I visit Beauty's shrine when I stand here
And gaze across a sparkling summer sea—
A sky so blue—it's heaven quite to me—
With stretches of Utopian gardens near.
A famous precipice,—that mighty seer,
Kamehameha, hurled through strategy—
His foes, the wind-god helped in victory—
A nation rose 'mid isles in Eden's sphere!

GINGER

Temples and temple gongs
Among the hills of Kyoto,
Temples and temple throngs.

Churches—the call to prayer—
I remember Antipolo,
The Filipinos there.

Mortals, what pilgrimage
Today as in the long ago,
Dear souls, what heritage.

('Tis strange tonight the ginger sets me dreaming,
Its fragrant incense and the holy meaning.)

A SUBMARINE SECRET

'Tis said that long ago in this fair land
Two chieftains fought, each with his warrior band ;
Full hard they fought, and strong, until one drove
The other far into an ocean cove—
And there he lived and spent his exiled hours
In painting life with all his magic powers ;
So that is how our rainbow fishes came
To greet our raptured eyes in Beauty's name.

THE OCTOPUS

No wonder that you hid,
You know you did—
You ugly, ugly squid.
Yet there is fascination—
But heaven quite forbid
To call it elevation—
In looking at you
And the things you do.

THE MAID OF THE MIST

(A Legend of Manoa Valley)

And when it rains the valley people tell
Of Kaha, daughter of the strong wind-god,
And Hine, goddess of the welcome rain,
Who rode her mother's chariot 'bove the dell.

And loved she was by Kauhi of the sea,
Herself a spirit scattering rain-drops down
Upon grass huts to see the earth folk run,
Sweet creature of the clouds, their mystery.

She longed to join the gay tobogganaging
Adown the grassy slopes, the sport of youth;
But Hine seeing what would follow, took
Her child from all such mortal happening.

Right to the mountain's other side they went,
And to the valley as a consequence,
Came drought apace, with man and beast athirst.
But Kaha meanwhile had her eyes earth-bent.

A cloud obliterating sky and sea
Found Kaha with the land folk, 'witching maid,
But only those of rank would dare come nigh,
Till young Mahana, great of chiefs was he.

And preparations royal were made right then,
And people sang her praises through the land,
But to the fateful sea she went, a shark!
And she did come within his awful ken!

For Kauhi, thus by jealousy inspired,
Killed Kaha, daughter of the strong wind-god,
And Hine, spirit of the welcome showers,
Their sorrow when it rains,—for I've inquired.

THE MOORISH IDOL

(Kihikihi, a Hawaiian Fish)

I worship thee, a god, at ocean deep,
Enshrined in coral of such vivid kind
That makes thee captivating to my mind!
As down I gaze where dreamy mermaids sleep,
A king thou art 'mong those that swim and creep.
The fisher's net is full, his purse gold-lined
Through thee, the natives say, thou rich designed—
He sets thee free, quaint fish of ocean deep!

A GARDEN IN HONOLULU

And in this garden grows just everything:
The broad acacia with its pinkish fringe,
The butterfly tree in its orchid tinge,
The golden shower, the pink, so full of Spring,
The fragrant coffee bloom. What gifts! I fling
Sharp Care away. He shall not even singe.
So to this spot what thoughts of life I hinge,
And rest secure, serene, that Heaven is King!

THE COIN DIVERS

They dive,
And thrive
On submerged wealth.

EMMA SQUARE

By day a lovely spot of arbored shade
Where old men talk of war, the weary rest;
By night the ukuleles play, caressed
By youth, carefree, in springtime serenade!
The old seem young again—their troubles fade—
The band brings Mem'ry back—in Childhood drest,
As sweet the babes across the green, as blest!
How wonderful the world that God hath made!

THE MOONLIGHT HULA

O dancer, you with lithesome form, I feel
The glamor of these isles in this rare light —
The fragrant leis, romantic sweet, of night;
The swish of grassy skirt; the moonbeams steal
What dryad glimpse of you, and yet you're real,
Enchantress of these wilds, to which you plight
Your troth, arabic-scented in my sight,
While playful moonbeams are the magic seal.

LOKELANI

Lokelani,
Of Hawaii,
Sweet rose for me.

Lokelani,
Of Waikiki,
My bride-to-be.

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE (*A Legend*)

Young Hiku with his arrow went
Upon adventure to the shore.
This arrow knew as much, and more,
As mortals who this earth frequent.

And Hiku asked it where to go,
Then shot it far into the air.
It landed by a maid most fair
Who hid it stealthily, when lo!

As Hiku questioned, Pua ne!
The arrow answered, and the maid
The game of love now deftly played—
And wreathed the leis of charms most gay.

His mother asked him to return
And not to linger with the throng,
Its joys, however, sweet the song,
No matter how his heart did yearn.

Kawelu loving him to death,
For so it proved that when he went
Life lost its all, its sweet content,
She drew her last expiring breath.

And messengers went then post-haste
To Hiku telling of her fate.
Alas! he had arrived too late,
'Most death itself he now must taste.

He got convolvulus, a vine,
And thus contrived a magic swing
On which he dropped, a corpse-like thing,
To depths where sun nor moon e'er shine.

And there where Milu is the King,
Where sky meets sea, where spirits dwell,
Young Hiku saw that all was well,
Kawelu spied the magic swing.

Her spirit like a butterfly
He clasped within the cocoanut shell,
Restored it to its mortal cell,—
Ah, surely, true love does not die!

THE SURF RIDER

It's O, to be alive today! I speed
Foot-winged, blest of the gods, a Mercury—
I ride the waves aglow in ecstacy!
When Neptune calls no other voice I heed—
The surf, the foam, the spray,—my only creed—
I feel the very soul of Liberty!

THE LURE OF HAWAII

The palms, they waved aloha o'er the sea,
A-beckoning me back to Hawaii;
The poincianas flamed their reddest fire,
The night blooms played as if on magic lyre;
The moon, ah me! the moon at Waikiki—
What dreamland this, and it belongs to me!

THE VALE OF NUUANU

And this is evening in Nuuanu!
I gaze on hills rich spanned by rainbow hue,
The scent of orange blossoms in the air,
The Cup of Gold whose fragrance is so rare,
The verdant, velvet hills—the sun goes down—
My angelus—what else could holier crown?

MAUI'S QUEST FOR IMMORTALITY

And Maui thought to take the hemlock cup
Of Death from man. Through depths and depths
he walked,
Himself, a victim, for the Demon stalked.
And much and long the people sat and talked,
But he will come again, though swallowed up.

ON THE WAY TO KILAUEA

We sail, lei-decked, where flying fishes play;
Past rugged, royal Oahu far amain,
Past Maui to Hawaii, and again
Lei-decked, we haste along a wondrous way.
Such vegetation, Nature in her gay,
Most festive mood! The giant tree ferns deign
To let poor mortals pass. Beyond, what pain!
Colossal Anguish lashed by fiery spray!

DIAMOND HEAD

So firm and staunch before the restless sea
You watch Earth's nations pass, (more restless they),
And guard what secrets vast, O silent clay
Wrapped in such mystic, Sphinx-like mystery,
Gibraltar of the Isles of Hawaii!
Magnificent your massive proud array
And of your hidden strength, O who can say—
Stern sentinel by far-famed Waikiki!

THE BOUGAINVILLEA

The bougainvillea vine,
What hearts it doth entwine!
Within its bowers
Gay Love's rare flowers,
In rain or shine.

A LUAU

A lei
Of maile,
A mango,
Some taro,
Breadfruit,
Arrowroot,
A yam,
Hawaiian clam,
Banana,
Papaia,
Mullet, (in ti leaves)
Pullet,
Squid,
Lanai kid,
A pig from Kau,
Molokai deer,
Root beer,
Cocoanut,
A grass hut—
You eat with a finger,
By ginger!
Some luau!
And poi—
O, boy!

ALONG THE WAIALAE RIDGE

(To the Trail and Mountain Club)

To see Oahu first—so now prepare
To don stout breeches, leggings, ride Shank's mare
Through klu brush path, forsooth, if it need be,
And lo! what pleasure doth this hike deed thee
Of broad expanse of sky, and sea, and land,
Discoverer's joys renewed on every hand—
Kukui trees, the koa—light and shade
Upon the hillside, in the quiet glade;
Lehua, and the sandalwood and more—
The hike's the thing to learn the woodland lore.
A picnic in the great outdoors at noon,
Be it December, or in flowery June.

Enough upon the heights, we move below,
A steep descent where giant tree ferns grow;
Ieie vines come staunch unto our aid
That really who, oh who, could be afraid?
The beaten path towards home, what tales to tell—
Shells grow on trees—a day of magic spell!

THE IRONWOOD TREE

The stately ironwood sang a wondrous song
Of all Earth's riches since the world began;
Of trees, and flowers, and birds,—the varied
throng
Of life, since Adam over all was man.

Beneath the ironwood on the moonlit beach,
Two lovers said, If we could only reach

The heart of this kind tree, for trees know much
Of Romeos and Juliets, and such—
(That walk so arrow-pierced on this earth
The path though old, yet new at every birth).

The ironwood lent a sympathizing ear,
And what was said, 'tis only lovers hear.

THE SPARROW

The sparrow is ubiquitous—
A chatty, little upstart, free
To roam the city streets, and nest
His mansion for the dynasty,
A castle, in the royal palm.

BEAUMONTIA

Beaumontia, with its sweet, white elegance,
With faintest pink to edge its dainty cup,
From which dear Nature's nectar we would sup
And feast enthralled where fairy elfins dance.

THE FOUR-O'CLOCK

Red, white or yellow,
With a perfume all its own—
Would that my ev'ry four o'clock
Were just as sweetly blown!

THE SANDPAPER VINE

A royal bower of bluish-lavender and purple,
Reminiscent of wisteria—
With leaves you're startled at touching—
Nature mimicking the artificial!

LEILANI

Not far from Diamond Head
A maid stood by the sea,
And ever as she pled,
Bring back my love to me!

The transport just had sailed
With soldiers from the post,
And nothing now availed
They'd sent him to the coast.

And long she gazed and sad,
Leilani, by the sea,
Recalling days more glad,
Bring back my love to me!

Beneath the tropic moon,
Beneath the stately palm,
Not every day is June,
Not every day is calm.

THE MAN WHO WEAVES LAUHALA MATS

The man who weaves lauhala mats
What wondrous tales he has to tell—
His skillful fingers work right well,
(He also weaves lauhala hats).

I sit beside him on the floor
And watch him weave, and weave, and weave;
And when it's more than time to leave
I'm listening to his magic lore.

Of Maui's stature, great was he;
The ocean's bed knew well his feet,
And when he stood, 'tis not deceit—
His head touched heaven's canopy.

It was a shark-god, long his name,
Who sought those of his kind who ate
The human race, and woe the fate
Of those he found and judged to blame.

The Menehunes worked at night,
Invisible, they were it seemed,
But strive they did when men but dreamed,
Then vanished with the morning light.

They built the sea walls, making bays;
They reared great reefs while it was dark.
Today we see they left their mark
In fish-ponds 'round the Island ways.

The man who weaves lauhala mats
What wondrous tales he has to tell—
His skillful fingers work right well,
(He also weaves lauhala hats).

I sit beside him on the floor
And watch him weave, and weave, and weave;
And when it's more than time to leave
I'm listening to his magic lore.

THE HEIAU

Up to the mountain's side they climbed as sent
By some weird ritual to fell a tree,
With adzes; tapa white, and prayers to free
The taint from sacred posts just newly rent.
Then back again the multitude that went
Now garlanded with leaves, the canopy
Of that strange structure by the potent sea.
The heiau stands a Druid monument.

THE SWEET PLUMERIA

Ah, where the sweet plumeria blooms
These nights, it seems that Heaven looms
Upon this earthly paradise,
Before our blinded, mortal eyes.

CITIES OF REFUGE

Yet even in those days of strife
They had respect for human life—
Cities of refuge they reared,
And safe were those who feared.

YLANG-YLANG

Ylang-ylang,
In the tropic night,
I feel a pang
Of sadness sweet.

THE JACARANDA

The graceful jacaranda
Close by my back veranda
In bluish-lavender arrayed—
What lavish Hand is here displayed!

KILAUEA

What seething mass of liquid fire! What awe
Creeps over me as waves burst flame, roll on,
And fume, dash angrily, in fury gone!
Such vision Dante dreamed. I nearer draw
And see Inferno mirrored as he saw!
Ah me! on earth what hell is paved, within
Its precinct scorched, what writhing feet! What sin
Of anguished fires, our very vitals gnaw!

THE AVIATOR

You span the infinite, and we of earth
Know not your joy, soul filled, at that great height!
You almost reach the angels in your flight,
Which seems to make you claim another birth!
To sail the skies, O birdman, 'tis well worth!
You are your country's eagle eye. What might
Throbs through you as you fly far out of sight,
Earth-free, and yet you guard the very hearth!

CADENA D'AMOR (*Mexican Creeper*)

Cadena d'amor,
The chain of love,
Pink and roseate
As the dawn.

THE SWAN SONG

Such meles as they sing—this witching song,
That haunts the very soul of me tonight,
Recalls what mem'ries vast with magic might!
I touch the heart-strings of the past and long
Would I dream on with that most mystic throng
Of those heroic days—my fancy's flight,
Song-wafted, yet the saddest at its height—
The passing of a race once grand and strong!

QUEEN LILIUOKALANI
(Born 1838; died 1917)

Hawaii's Queen, the last, has passed away!
The world, war-worn, gigantic in its pain,
Yet feels this word, the news of Death's rich gain
In laying low a head—a sceptre's sway!
The rare kahilis wave of ancient day,
The chants of Hawaii's most sad refrain
Hold fast all thoughts—the thoughts we can't restrain—
Brave Queen—that Time will always Homage pay!

IMMORTALITY

Here stephanotis, jasmine, these of night
Exhaling forth their sweet perfumery;
The sky rich studded, would we seek more light
To view the realm of immortality?

ABSENCE

And when the tassel's on the sugar cane,
So delicately lavender and sweet,
Dear heart, you will be coming back again,—
If Time would only make itself more fleet!

THE GOLDEN ROD

On the mainland
Almost a weed—
But here
You buy it—
Glorify it—
Indeed!

OCTOBER IN THE PALACE GROUNDS

Just a glimpse of autumn—
Of the brilliant maple
And the changing oak—
In thee, kamani!

THE PASSING OF QUEEN LILIUOKALANI

Within the grounds, dark-walled, with only light
Of torch, borne from your home at midnight hour,
Hawaii's Queen—the incense of each flower
And heart is yours, with all the ancient rite
Of grand old days in all their magic might,
And Death but gives you more than earthly power!
"Be steadfast"—yours was not to shrink or cower;
You dwelt serene, unmoved, within that tower
And now what welcome's yours from Heaven's height!
This week you lie in royal state—what wealth
Of golden days in which all sadness blends!
Old friends who knew you in your girlish health
And through what trials—the story never ends—
We hear your olis chanted—then by stealth
The curtain falls—another Day ascends!

KAWAIAHAO CHURCH

Kawaiahao, what golden links are thine,
The chain engraved by Fame, a century
Of marked events in which posterity
Will read with growing reverence every line
That Time has writ thereon, and see the sign
That Kaahumanu saw in knowing thee,
Where she did worship God who made her free
Of idols she did ably countermine.
Kamehamehas in their hours of stress
Flocked to thy solace from the storms without.
Thy coral walls if they could but confess
To all the happenings of life about;
Of potent missionary days that press
Their influence where all was fear and doubt!

Within thy grounds a King at rest, the dust
Of great and small,—unnamed,—in God they
trust!

MY HOME PORT

'Twas on the Hooghly River,
The mate, a gallant lad,
Sang in his sailor's way
Of trips that he had had.

He'd been to Mandalay,
And sang to prove the tale,
Of Burmah and its bay;
A maid still waiting there.

A song for every port—
For Nippon, fair Cathay—
A roving, nautical sort,
For them that sail the sea.

He'd watched the sunset glow
Around the Orient,
And sang so soft and low
Of Inez, child of Spain

And of the Philippines;
Of all the haunting languor
That fills those tropic scenes
With love dreams 'neath the palms.

And as I sailed the Hooghly,
Sweet Lei Lehua
Came floating back to me,
And I was home again.

A CHRISTMAS COMPENSATION

If we have no snow and ice
Except on Mauna Kea,
Mauna Loa,
We have holly—
For the jolly
Christmas-tide!

KANE
(*A Legend*)

When famine stalked throughout the land
'Twas Kane said, "Dig wide a hole,
And heat the rocks like fiery coal!"
Right well they worked at his command.

"But where's the food?" the people cried.
Great Kane called, "I am the feast."
And here the wonder's never ceased,
The hungry had their wants supplied.

For Kane laid himself full down
Upon the red hot rocks, the men
They covered him with earth, and when
The time was ripe, up rose the town,

And great excitement reigned the while,
For pigs there were, and chickens rare,
And taro, yams, enough to spare,
All cooked as if in kingly style.

But where was Kane who had done
This miracle? Was he the feast?
And so the wonder was increased,
Which proved a god may have his fun.

For at the merrymaking, gay
They danced and sang, a happy band,
Along the shore on moonlit sand,
When through a subterranean way—

The people stood amazed, weak-kneed,
Was it an apparition there?
But no, a mien immortals wear—
Out Kane walked, a god indeed!

AT WAIKIKI

I feel the freedom of the sea,
Its quick response in loving me,
The sheer delight in every limb,
O, Neptune, since I've learned to swim!

HALEIWA

A country cousin much desired,
In all of Nature's charms attired;
An anchorage of rest;
By honeymooners blest.

KITE DAY AT MILLS SCHOOL

Big kites,
Little kites,
Wee mites,
Flying,
Dying,
Going out to sea,
Was there ever such liberty?
All kinds and sizes,
Out for prizes—
Fighting kites
For boys' rights—
Overhead is Mars,
Among the stars.

THE MAID FROM CATHAY

Ah, tell me, maid from far Cathay,
Wherein thy charm doth lie.
Is it in thine almond eye,
Or in thy cheek of rare peach bloom,
In thy quaintly buttoned jacket,
Or thy trouserette?

I know the maid of Mandalay,
The Arab girl of famed Khartoum,
But thee, fair maid from far Cathay,
Who could forget?

THE SECRET OF FIRE-MAKING

To start a fire, great Maui got
The secret from the mud hens, sly:
To rub the hau, two pieces dry,
Food for the gods, rich, piping hot.

The secret it was hard to get,
The mud hens taxed their brains, as did
Our demi-god as he lay hid
To catch them in his wily net.

At last he caught the chief mud hen
Who kept him far from off the track,
Until he put her on the rack—
A red spot on her head since then.

MOONLIGHT IN HONOLULU

I never saw the sky so bright as here—
So many starry gems so richly set!
The stately palm—that wondrous silhouette—
I view at nightfall more than doubly dear.
The moon just rising back of Punchbowl, near,
So near, to earth, God's sign, lest we forget!
And here the Choir Invisible I've met
And listened to the music of God's sphere!

THE POINSETTIA

In festive red, insignia of Christmas cheer,
The gay poinsettia hails the day we hold most dear.

THE POMEGRANATE

With flowers, afame,
And fruit, like balls rich-painted,
Dangling,
Dangling.

THE PASSING OF THE DUCK PONDS

In Manila the moat,
Of medieval note,
For the sake of sanitation,
Had to go;
And here these stretches of stagnation
Have a foe—
The far-famed Duck Ponds, even with their awful scent,
An air of picturesqueness to the landscape lent.

THE ROSE MALLOW

(Flowering Maple)

She is adept at changing her attire—
In the morning she wears white,
At noon, pink,
Towards evening, red.

THE POINCIANA

And when the light shines through the poinciana tree,
Upon the concrete walk, a dainty tracery
Of patterns, quaint and fine as any Spanish lace,
Appears, that surely 'tis not shadows that I chase!

THE ALGAROBA

The feathery algaroba—
Generous in shade
And provender.

THE TROUBADOURS

Hawaiian troubadours
A-strolling through the streets—
In moonlit fairyland—
Their music greets.

THE HIBISCUS

I look on thee, thou flower of endless range
And view the hollyhock as garden walls;
The rose rich blooming in ancestral halls;
The morning-glory;—in thy ceaseless change
Of form and shade, so think it not so strange
We name thee by thy passing moods—each calls
To mind some clinging mem'ry that entralls—
'Mong flowers—thou mocking-bird of wondrous
range!

THE BANYAN

A home for colonies of birds;
Wide-spreading are its arms,
Exempt from all of Earth's alarms,—
Embedded like mysterious caves
Whence Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves
Have fled.

THE PANDANUS

With leaves of useful fiber,
And roots
Like muskets stacked.

THE NIGHT-BLOOMING CEREUS

I stand before thy chalice, angel-white,
And view God's marvel in thy purity—
Gold-lined within—I gaze in ecstacy!
The moon, that fair and lovely Queen of Night,
Looks on entranced from Heaven's magic height,
Full proud of thee, her grand monopoly;—
The sun knows not in part such rhapsody!
And God Himself seems near with thee in sight,
Pure flower of Paradise unstained on earth!
What time I've spent along the toilsome trail
In far-off foreign lands; endured what dearth
Of thirst unquenched—the weary pilgrim's tale—
And here tonight I feel my great unworth—
For is this not, dear Lord, Thy Holy Grail?

THE CROWN OF THORNS

The crown of thorns,
Christ's crown of thorns,
With flowers like drops
Of blood.

ALOHA

Aloha, 'tis a greeting true and clear!
I feel it in the air, among the flowers,
Through all the day, through all the dreamy hours—
What other land can welcome more than here?
With all its winning ways, I hold most dear
This land of sunshine e'en amidst the showers;
Of vivid coloring in all its bowers;
And ev'rywhere's aloha true and clear!

